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J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
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521 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Edward L. Burlingame
Senior Vice President

December 4, 1978

Dr. William Korey
Director
B'nai B'rith International Council
315 Lexington Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

Dear Dr. Korey:

I was glad to have the opportunity of meeting you at the Freedom to Publish Committee meeting on November 27th.

I have written to Ambassador Espil and enclose a copy of my letter. I am also asking each of the committee members to write individually to him and I have asked the American PEN Center if they too will write. I hope these letters may help and I would be glad to know of anything else our committee might do to assist Senor Timmerman.

Sincerely,

Edward Burlingame
Editor In Chief

EB/sb

TELEX 83 4566
Phone: 212-687-3080 Cable, Lippcol, New York

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December 1, 1978

The Honorable Aja Espil
Argentinian Ambassador to the United States
1600 New Hampshire Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Ambassador Espil:

You may remember that I wrote to you on February 9, 1978 expressing the concern of the International Freedom to Publish Committee of the Association of American Publishers over the detention, reportedly without charge, of Jacobo Timmerman.

We understand that Sr. Timmerman is now under house arrest and that he has expressed his wish to leave Argentina in order to join his wife and his son in Israel. His son is planning to be married in Israel later this month and Sr. Timmerman wishes to be present at his wedding.

May I express the Association of American Publishers' strong wish that humanitarian concerns will influence the decision of your government and that Sr. Timmerman will be released from house arrest and permitted to leave the country. We would appreciate a reply from you informing us of your government's position on this case.

Yours sincerely,

ELB/js

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(5) 50

October 19, 1978

Senator Jacob Javits
Russell S.O.B. Building
Room # 321
NEW YORK CITY, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

I am taking the liberty of writing to you as an American rabbi who has been working in Argentina for the last 19 years and who at present is very much involved in the Human Rights question in Argentina, as a member of the Executive Committee of the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights.

The specific purpose of this letter is to enlist your aid in the case of one of Argentina's leading journalists and publishers, JACOBO TIMMERMAN. I am Mr.Timmerman's rabbi and have been the only individual outside of his immediate family who has been regularly permitted to visit him and to minister to his spiritual and emotional needs.

I believe that the time is appropriate for a concerted effort on behalf of Mr.Timmerman's final freedom, as a result of the Military Tribunal's declaration (in 1977) of his innocence with regard to any terrorist connections, as well as the declaration of his innocence on the part of the Argentine Supreme Court (in 1978).

Inspite of these two declarations, Mr.Timmerman is still a prisoner in his home with 30 policemen guarding his residence around the clock. May I ask you, in the name of what unites us all,namely the battle for human freedom, to write a letter to the President of Argentina, General Jorge Rafael Videla, requesting the immediate liberation and, if not, at least the immediate expulsion of Mr.Jacobo Timmerman, so that he can join his three sons who are already living in Israel.

According to my sources, there are significant elements within the present Argentine government who are very much interested in the betterment of relationships with the government of the United States of America. On the other hand, the extreme rightist elements in the Armed Forces of Argentina, are very much opposed to Mr.Timmerman's liberation. I am convinced that this has a great deal to do with the

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fact that Timmerman is a Jew and has been actively involved in Zionist activities for many years.

Your writing of such a letter to the President of Argentina and the inclusion of such correspondence in the Congressional record, would have a significant impact upon the Military Junta and would thus, hopefully, lead to the liberation of an innocent man who has been in prison for a year and a half.

I am addressing similaraappeals to the following Senators and Congressmen:

Abraham Ribicoff; Dante Fascell; Lago Marino; Gus Yaton; Ben Gilman; Silvio Conde.

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Marshall T.Meyer
Rector

MTM/bp

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Monopoly Games Newspapers Play ■ Independent Producers vs. the Networks

COLUMBIA
JOURNALISM
REVIEW

MAY / JUNE 1980 • $2 50
NATIONAL MEDIA MONITOR • PRESS / RADIO / TV

WAR ON THE PRESS

An Argentine survivor's personal account

by Jacobo Timerman

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COLUMBIA
JOURNALISM
REVIEW
MAY/JUNE 1980

The Bodies Counted Are Our Own

In view of the massacre of journalists in Argentina, and of the toll of victims of repression worldwide, 'the press must join the battle for human rights,' says long-jailed journalist Jacobo Timerman

After more than a year in Argentine prisons, on April 17, 1978, Timerman is put under strict house arrest

Wide World

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by JACOBO TIMERMAN

For many years, we have been subjected to a drumroll of tragic statistics—the genocides in Southeast Asia, the thousands imprisoned in the Russian gulags, the millions exterminated in Nazi concentration camps, the hordes of Chinese executed in Mao's cultural revolution, the scores of people—their corpses coated with cement—who were thrown into the Rio de la Plata by the government of Argentina The question for the press is a moral one Is it enough merely to report the impersonal statistics?

As a recently released political prisoner, my strong belief is that the press must join the battle for human rights in the world I believe it must go beyond answering the question of how many lives have been lost and ask itself the question How many lives can we save? The numbers here are a traumatic statistic

I discovered that a special relationship exists between journalism and human rights, first as an editor of a newspaper engaged in the human-rights struggle under a military dictatorship, then as a prisoner subjected to torture by that same government For thirty months—from April 15, 1977, through September 25, 1979—I was held captive by the Argentine army I spent twelve months in various prisons, although I had not been charged with any crime nor had I ever been brought to trial, and I spent eighteen months under strict house arrest

For the first forty days I was kept in a clandestine jail, where I was tortured and interrogated For the next thirty days, my jail was in the police headquarters in Buenos Aires There I was allowed to see my wife and children for from three to five minutes each day in a small room crowded with people Although it was difficult to carry on a conversation there, I was able to

Jacobo Timerman, former publisher of the Argentine newspaper La Opinión, *was abducted by government agents in 1977 and held prisoner by the Argentine army for thirty months Last October, he was stripped of his citizenship and expelled from the country Now living in Israel, he is a columnist for the Tel Aviv daily* Maariv

The Toll in Latin America

Journalists and writers imprisoned, killed, 'disappeared'

ARGENTINA

Guillermo Alfiere (news editor *El Independiente*) imprisoned tortured

Elsa Altuna (general secretary, Uruguayan Press Association), disappeared

Lucina Alvarez de Barros (journalist, *Barrilete*) disappeared

Maria Elena Amadio (journalist *Barrilete*) imprisoned whereabouts unknown

Marcos Basilio Arocena (Uruguayan writer) disappeared

Juan Jose Azcone, disappeared

Osvaldo Balbi (writer) imprisoned

Rolando Baradino (writer) disappeared

Oscar Barros (journalist, *Barrilete*), disappeared

Maria Bedoian de Ikonikoff (editor, *Dinamis*) disappeared

Horacio Felix Bertholet (journalist), disappeared

Guillermo Juan Bettanin (journalist), disappeared

Leonardo Bettanin (journalist *Confirmado*) murdered

Cristina Bettanin (journalist *Dinamis*) murdered

Miguel Jacobo Brzostowski (printing worker) disappeared

Miguel Angel Bustos (journalist *El Cronista Comercial*) disappeared

Dardo Cabo (editor, *El Descamisado*) killed while allegedly escaping from prison

Juan Jose Capdepont (journalist), disappeared

Rafael Capellupo (editor *La Razón*) imprisoned whereabouts unknown

Aldo Nestor Casadidio (journalist), disappeared

Pedro Cazes Camarero (journalist) imprisoned tortured

Conrado Ceretti (journalist *El Cronista Comercial*, *La Opinión Panorama América Latina*) abducted whereabouts unknown

Ines Adriana Cobo (journalist) disappeared

Ruben Oscar Contardi (journalist), disappeared

Haroldo Conti (writer), disappeared

Luis Cordoba (journalist) disappeared

Hugo Coulin Novillo (journalist *Prensa Libre*), murdered

Andres Cultelli (journalist), imprisoned

Daniel Alberto Danquen disappeared

Eduardo Delfieri disappeared

Julien Jose Delgado (editor, *El Cronista Comercial*, *Mercado*), disappeared

Hector Ernesto Demarchi (journalist, *El Cronista Comercial*), disappeared

Carlos Maria Denis (journalist) disappeared

Mabel K de Dominguez (writer, *El Mundo*), disappeared

Pablo Dorigo (journalist, Channel 9 TV, Buenos Aires) disappeared

Dardo Sebastian Dorronsoro (writer), abducted whereabouts unknown

Jose Guillermo Espinoza Pesantes (Peruvian journalist), disappeared

Enrique Esteban (journalist), imprisoned

Miguel Angel Fernandez (editor and director *Norte*) imprisoned whereabouts unknown

Maria Cristina Fernandez de Pankomin (journalist), disappeared

Hector Ferreiros (journalist, Pelam News Agency) murdered

Ernesto Luis Fossatti (journalist, *La Semana Panorania*), disappeared

Jorge Horacio Foulkes (journalist), disappeared

Gerardo Gatti (Uruguayan journalist), abducted whereabouts unknown

Marcelo Ariel Gelman (journalist, *Noticias Gente*) disappeared

Hector Giordano Cortazzo (Uruguayan journalist) disappeared

Raymundo Gleyzer (journalist), abducted

Hugo Goldsman (journalist, *Noticias*), murdered

Celica Gomez Rosado (Uruguayan journalist) disappeared

Claudio Nicolas Grandi (writer), disappeared

Felix Granovsky (journalist) disappeared

Luis Guagnini (correspondent *Latin American Political and Economic Review* (London) Interpress Service (Rome), *El Pais* (Madrid)) abducted whereabouts unknown

Diana Griselda Guerrero (journalist, *Discusión*), abducted, whereabouts unknown

Mario Hernandez (journalist *Militancia*) disappeared

Mario Herrera (journalist, *Confirmado*) disappeared

Juan Carlos Hica (editor, *Akuko Nippon*), disappeared

Mario Hugo Idelman (journalist) disappeared

Santiago Jose Illa (journalist) disappeared

Ignacio Ikonikoff (journalist, *Ciencia Nueva*, *Panorama*), disappeared

Juan Carlos Jordan (Bolivian journalist), disappeared

Eduardo Jozami (journalist), imprisoned

Gloria Kehoe Wilson (writer) disappeared

Mabel Kitzler (journalist), disappeared

Alfredo A Kolliker (journalist *Prensa Libre*) disappeared

Miguel Lizazo (director *La Causa Peronista*), disappeared

Susana Lugones (journalist *La Opinión*, *Siete Dias*, *Noticias*, *Crisis*), disappeared

Ernesto Magarinos (printers' trade union leader) disappeared

Hector Marcelo Marghetich (journalist), disappeared

Francisco Marin (reporter, *La Nación*) murdered

Elsa Delia Martinez (journalist) disappeared

Mario Martinez (journalist), disappeared

Ricardo Manuelle (graphics worker), abducted whereabouts unknown

Winston Mazzuchi Frantches (Uruguayan journalist) disappeared

Jorge Medina (telecommunications worker), abducted whereabouts unknown

Susana Beatriz Medina de Bertholet (journalist), disappeared

Nebio Ariel Melo Cuestas (Uruguayan journalist) disappeared

Luis Carlos Monaco (journalist) disappeared

Cristina del Valle Morandini Huespe (journalist), disappeared

Jorge Daniel Moyano (journalist) disappeared

Hector Oesterheld (German journalist), disappeared

Sergio Peralta (writer), arrested, whereabouts unknown

Carlos Perez (editor, journalist *Clarin*), disappeared

Marta Perez (journalist *La Razón*), abducted whereabouts unknown

Rafael Perrota (journalist), disappeared

Enrique Piera (journalist), disappeared

Luis Piris (journalist), disappeared

Bruno Thomas Pippino (journalist), disappeared

Horacio Norberto Poggio (Italian journalist), disappreared

Rodolfo Fernandez Pondal (director, *Ultima Clave*), abducted whereabouts unknown

Enrique Raab (journalist, Clarin), disappeared

José A Ramacciotti (editor *Estrella de la Mañana*) imprisoned, whereabouts unknown

Jose Eduardo Ramos (journalist) disappeared

Alcira Rios de Cordoba (journalist) disappeared

Edgardo Sajon (director of graphics *La Opinión*), disappeared

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tell my family of at least some of the tortures I had been subjected to No journalists were permitted to see me, and those who heard of my experiences raised the question Who will be named as the source if we publish any of this information? Fearful of what the government might do, I did not want my family to be named And the national press was afraid to act

The international press, too, had to have some source to whom to attribute details Despite the difficulties involved, I was able to put together some news, which was then sent abroad When, subsequently, I was transferred to another clandestine prison, my family was acutely aware that my only hope of being saved lay in spreading the word about my situation

Then, once again, I was back in the hands of the army This time, however, there was less torture and some guards even showed me brief Argentine newspaper accounts about my disappearance The accounts bore datelines from various cities and were credited to news agencies So the news *was* getting out

My situation improved after the arrival, first, of Patricia Derian, U S Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, then of U S Representative Benjamin Gilman, of New York, in August 1977, who, as a member of the Inter-American Affairs Subcommittee, was allowed to interview me in the Casa Rosada in Buenos Aires I was transferred to a legal prison There, whenever they could win the friendship of one of the guards, journalists were able to get some newspapers to me There, too, I was allowed to see my family for up to an hour a day

As time went on, we were able to organize and refine a kind of news-spreading chain, whose effectiveness demonstrated to us the importance of the press It worked like this

☐ Each time *The Buenos Aires Herald*—the outspoken English-language daily—published an article about my situation, my wife and children distributed

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María Elena San Martín de Valetti (writer) disappeared
Roberto Jorge Santoro (journalist), disappeared
Juan Miguel Satragno (journalist) disappeared
Víctor Eduardo Seib (journalist *La Nación*) disappeared
Jorba Luis Seruco (journalist), disappeared
Horacio Rodolfo Speratto (journalist) disappeared
Eduardo Suarez (journalist *El Cronista Comercial El Mundo Noticias*), disappeared
Virginia Adela Suarez (journalist) disappeared
Patricia Villa de Suarez (journalist, Inter Press Agency) disappeared
Enrique Walker (journalist *Gente Nuevo Hombre Semana Gráfica El Descamisado*) imprisoned whereabouts unknown
Rodolfo Walsh (journalist essayist *Prensa Latina La Opinión Noticias Mayoría*) disappeared presumed murdered
Tito Wenner (editor, *El Actual*) disappeared
Miguel Zazala Rodriguez (journalist *El Auténtico*) murdered

CHILE

Diana Aaron Svigilsky (journalist), imprisoned
Alberto N Alvarado (journalist) imprisoned whereabouts unknown
Mario Eduardo Calderon Tapia (journalist) imprisoned
Gustavo Canihuante (writer), imprisoned whereabouts unknown
Hernando Augusto Carmona (journalist *Punto Final*) murdered
Hector Contreras Rojas (radio journalist former leader of radio workers union) imprisoned whereabouts unknown
Luis Eduardo Duran Rivas (journalist), imprisoned tortured whereabouts unknown
Maximo Gedda Ortiz (journalist and screenwriter) imprisoned believed tortured to death
Jorge Arturo Grez Aburto (writer), imprisoned, tortured, whereabouts unknown
Silva Muller (film cameraman and screenwriter), imprisoned
Marta Neira Muñoz (writer), disappeared
Fernando Ortiz Letelier (writer), imprisoned whereabouts unknown
Hernan Perez (freelance photographer), shot during arrest whereabouts unknown
Carlos Fredy Perez Vargas (publisher) imprisoned
Manuel Recabarren Rojas (journalist), disappeared
Guillermo Galvez Rivadeneira (director *Hechos Mundiales*), disappeared
Manuel Rivas Rachitoff (editor, *Ultima Hora, Posición*) arrested, tortured whereabouts unknown
Ricardo Rojas Ross (journalist), arrested whereabouts unknown
Francisco Rozas (photographer, journalist) imprisoned
Ramiro Sepulveda Contreras (journalist Radio Magallanes), imprisoned, whereabouts unknown
Luis Archibaldo Villaflor Rivera (journalist, *El Siglo* Radio Riquelme), imprisoned

CUBA

Raul Artiega Martinez (writer and founder of the Association of Free Poets and Writers of Cuba) imprisoned
Angel Cuadra Landgrove (writer), imprisoned
Amaro Gomez (cinematographer), imprisoned

GUATEMALA

Julio Cesar Hernandez (broadcast reporter) kidnapped tortured, hospitalized
Wilmer McDonald (son of editor of the *Guatemalan Flash*), abducted whereabouts unknown
Enrique Slazar Solorzano (newscaster, Nuevo Mundo radio station) arrested, whereabouts unknown
Werner Rosnall Trejo (journalist *La Noche* son of editor of *La Opinión*), disappeared

HAITI

Gerard Augustin (journalist) imprisoned, cruelly treated
Marie Thèrese Feval (journalist, radio broadcaster), imprisoned

MEXICO

Roberto Falcón (journalist *El Norteste*) shot and killed by military patrol
Jose Guadalupe Mendivil (journalist *El Diario de Culiacán*) murdered
Roberto Martinez Montenegro (journalist *El Norteste*), murdered

NICARAGUA

Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Cardenal (editor, *La Prensa*), murdered

PARAGUAY

Hector Rodriguez (editor *ABC Color*), imprisoned

PERU

Augusto Zimmermann Zavala (journalist, *Kausachum*), imprisoned

URUGUAY

Eduardo Acerenza (writer), imprisoned
Maria Victoria Barcelo (journalist *El Popular*), held incommunicado allegedly tortured whereabouts unknown
Raul Bianchi (writer) imprisoned whereabouts unknown
Samuel Blixen (journalist) imprisoned
Jorge Bottaro (writer) imprisoned
Oscar Cabrera (journalist, *Ultima Hora*), imprisoned whereabouts unknown
Hiber Contreris (journalist, *Marcha*), imprisoned allegedly tortured
Alfonso Avelino Fernandez Cabrelli (writer, editor), imprisoned
Niurka Fernandez (journalist), imprisoned
Silvia Garcia de Betancourt (writer), reportedly imprisoned whereabouts unknown
Sigifredo Gurida (writer), imprisoned, whereabouts unknown
Rita Ibarburu de Suarez (editor, *Estudios*, former editor, *Nosotras*), imprisoned
Jose Jorge Martínez (journalist) imprisoned allegedly tortured
Winston Mazzuchi (editor) disappeared, reportedly imprisoned
Nebio Melo (editor), disappeared, whereabouts unknown
Fernando Miranda (writer), disappeared, whereabouts unknown
Herminio Osorio (journalist), reportedly imprisoned
Santiago Puchet (journalist, co-owner of printing press), imprisoned reportedly tortured
Hector Pio Rodriguez de Silva (journalist), imprisoned
Mauricio Rosenkoff (writer), imprisoned reportedly tortured
Edmundo Rovira Sauro (correspondent *El Pais*) imprisoned
Elias Tulbowitz (administrator, *Estudios*) imprisoned
Juan Carlos Urruzala (Argentine journalist, *El Popular*), held incommunicado tortured held in military hospital
Ismael Weinberger (editor *El Popular*) reportedly held incommunicado and tortured imprisoned

This list is based on information compiled by PEN American Center

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copies to the international news agencies and to foreign correspondents They also telexed these articles to papers throughout the world

☐ My wife also engaged Argentine journalists to write articles, under a pseudonym, which were then sent off to newspapers and magazines abroad As they appeared, copies of these articles would then be distributed to the international news agencies in Buenos Aires A few Argentine papers would always print at least a few lines

☐ Through the help of friends, my wife and children managed to obtain statements on my behalf from abroad—from institutions, prominent politicians, authors, and clergy If the statement was issued in a small French city and not picked up by the French press, we would try to have it played up elsewhere in Europe—London, for example—and then sent via a news agency to Buenos Aires

While it is probably true that the Argentine press used no more than one percent of what was published abroad, all the clippings from the foreign press about Argentina were on the desks of army leaders and members of the government It became clear to us that what appeared to be merely professional journalistic reporting compelled the government to become more concerned about establishing its "legal" relationship with me The government showed its power by confiscating my newspaper (it is now owned by the army and edited by a colonel) and other property, and by taking away my citizenship and expelling me from Argentina, but it could not accuse me of any crime because the international press had already laid bare the true nature of my situation that I had been imprisoned and my paper closed down because I denounced all kinds of terrorism, whether carried out by the left or the right, the state or the individual, because *La Opinión* defended the right to life and to a legal trial of any arrested person and published lists of the thousands of abduction victims who were never heard of again (*The Buenos Aires Herald* was the only other paper that performed a similar task Last December, its editor, Robert Cox, had to leave Argentina because of the constant death threats he and his family had received As he explained in an article in *Newsweek*, the threats came from the very security forces which should have protected him from them)

My family and I were able to establish our simple, yet effective, news-spreading chain because I am a professional journalist I was encouraged to continue my efforts, both when in prison and later under house arrest, because I observed that each time a prisoner's relative was able to give him some facts about the campaign being waged on my behalf, the prisoner felt encouraged he assumed that, beyond the prison walls, the international press was taking a strong stand against the Argentine dictatorship Often, this was the only source of encouragement I believe, however, that prisoners of conscience deserve more than the notice accorded a journalist who, like myself, happens to have good contacts abroad They deserve attention on their own account

Unofficial estimates of the number of Argentine journalists who have "disappeared" or been murdered by members of the military forces range from sixty to seventy It would seem that in Argentina we have witnessed the first genocide of journalists to occur in a Western hemisphere nation Two years ago, the Inter-American Press Association awarded its Ottmar Mergenthaler prize for the struggle for a free press to the murdered and missing journalists of Argentina and to those imprisoned there. Fearful of the government's repressive measures, the Argentine delegation to the IAPA congress did not accept the prize It is being held in the association's offices in Miami, waiting for someone to claim it Perhaps it is waiting to be claimed by the ghosts of all those Argentine journalists who were tortured with electric shocks, whose feet were burned, whose genitals were smashed by hammer blows, whose corpses were thrown into the sea from a helicopter

Why has the military government's violence against journalists reached a magnitude that is, perhaps, even greater than that brought to bear against the nation's terrorists? A totalitarian government, be it left wing or right wing, has a fixed image of itself, a rigid concept of its role in history, and an unshakeable concept of its own justness The only force that can topple this monolithic structure is the press For only the press can dispute that monopoly on reality which is the sine qua non for the existence of any totalitarian government Another essential is that it must project an image of strength But when a government persecutes obsessively, it is, in fact, weak To allow itself to be perceived as weak is, for a totalitarian government, intolerable Thus, the government of Argentina has consistently sought to prevent coverage of its murderous fury

Obsessed with maintaining an image of strength and rectitude, totalitarian governments pay close attention to foreign coverage It may be useful at this point to describe the kind of attention such coverage receives In Argentina, the international press is reviewed daily by the intelligence agencies and specialists in psychological warfare, as well as by assistants in the offices of the president, the army, and the ministry of economics

Typical scenarios, with appropriate officialese, could be as follows

Place Army General Headquarters Meeting of the Commander in Chief with heads of various divisions

Object of the Meeting Report of the head of the Intelligence Department on recent events related to the campaign against Argentina being conducted abroad

Report Long article in *Le Monde* about a group of Argentine mothers who reported their children had disappeared

Conclusion *Le Monde* is a newspaper controlled by the French left-wing, and its reporting on Argentina is exclusively in the hands of the terrorists in exile Other French news-

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papers have been gradually distancing themselves from the public relations office engaged by the Argentine government in Paris and from the office of communication opened by the presidency of the Argentine nation The anti-Argentine campaign in France will be difficult to counteract

Report Article in *The Washington Post* on the conditions of prisons in Argentina

Conclusion *The Washington Post* has joined the anti-Argentine campaign Therefore it must be assumed that, given the influence of this newspaper in Washington, it would be difficult to get any American congressmen to become interested in defending the Argentine point of view It is to be expected that a sister publication, *Newsweek*, will pick up the campaign In all likelihood *The Washington Post*, through its contacts in Congress, will lead some congressmen to demand from the Argentine government a public statement on the conditions of some prisoners

Suggestion That the ambassador in Washington attempt to persuade friendly congressmen to write personal letters to the president of Argentina, expressing their interest in the fate of some prisoners whose release could be [safely] granted in the immediate future [as a face-saving device]

The above may seem a hallucination However, it accurately depicts a part of the mechanism used to deal with Argentina's image abroad This mechanism is capable of producing an infinite variety of responses purchase of special sections in newspapers and magazines to explain the government's point of view, the offer of lucrative contracts to foreign news agencies in exchange for a benevolent attitude regarding Argentina, or for at least remaining silent on the subject of human rights violations, search for renowned scholars who will justify the barbaric repressions with apocalyptic arguments about what would have happened if such measures had not been taken, invitations to journalists and public figures to visit the country under the government's auspices, engagement of large public relations agencies in New York, Frankfurt, London, Paris, Rome, utilization of multinational corporations, owning highly profitable businesses in Argentina, as pressure groups in their own countries

One could go on and on But all I am trying to bring out is the inordinate importance that a totalitarian government gives to its image Given this chink in the armor of a totalitarian regime, journalists throughout the world must decide whether simply giving information about what is happening—the numbers of those killed, "missing," or imprisoned—is enough Or whether they must go beyond a journalism that merely exposes reality to one that helps to save lives

The difference between tragic statistics—the sum of lives lost—and traumatic statistics—the sum of those we might have saved—was a subject I often discussed with my staff in Buenos Aires It was a matter I was led to understand only because I was forced to live it through, because I had to decide daily which of two attitudes to adopt Should I try to save as many lives as possible even if this meant a confrontation with the army, or should I remain silent, as did the editors of other Argentine papers, who justified their silence by claiming that, in a better future, they would still be around to help democratize the country? I chose to save lives I believe Robert Cox did, too And both of us were forced to leave Argentina

The violation of human rights in the world has reached such levels of permanency, magnitude, and sophistication that I, for one, cannot see how journalists can still regard the topic as a subtheme in political, social, and diplomatic coverage I believe it has become a theme, or beat, in itself And in moral terms, coverage of it has become an obligation Even in professional terms, it deserves a department to itself, one requiring no less commitment, space, and specialization than that required for a paper's "Bridge," "Furniture," or "Food" departments

In my office as editor of *La Opinión*, I was able to save lives by covering human rights as thoroughly as sports, for instance And when I was in prison, I could often ascertain that a few lines in *The New York Times*, an article in *Le Figaro*, or a statement in *Il Corriere della Sera* had immediate repercussions on our living conditions and treatment as prisoners I witnessed how a campaign conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* saved the lives of an entire Argentine family And I myself would not be free now had not the foreign press—the U S press, in particular—kept up a steady barrage of coverage about my plight

On many occasions while in prison I asked myself what would happen if the world's twenty leading newspapers were to print a weekly list of journalists imprisoned for defending the free press in different countries One could ask why journalists and not physicians I do not know But this was my thought in prison because I realized that the press can do more in the struggle for human rights than the pope, the United Nations, and Amnesty International

The tragic statistics that appear in the press these days are, perhaps, inevitable But perhaps we could do something to reduce the magnitude of those statistics, if for no other reason than to keep the press from being haunted by the nightmare of thinking it could have saved some lives if only it had realized the true extent of its influence

Many of my fellow prisoners of conscience and I knew that our release was not close at hand However, when some newspapers reported on our situation in distant places of this world, be it a small town or a large city, this news reached us by that miracle of communication which political prisoners the world over have managed to establish And it helped us to live through that day, to not give up in the face of filth, starvation, and despair, to reject suicide A small piece of information published in San Diego or Quebec, in Edinburgh or Naples, in Tel Aviv or Costa Rica, lifted, if only briefly, the burden of that worst of all punishments loneliness The awareness that there was someone out there who, for a moment of his or her life, cared about us saved many lives

And only journalism could do it ■

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